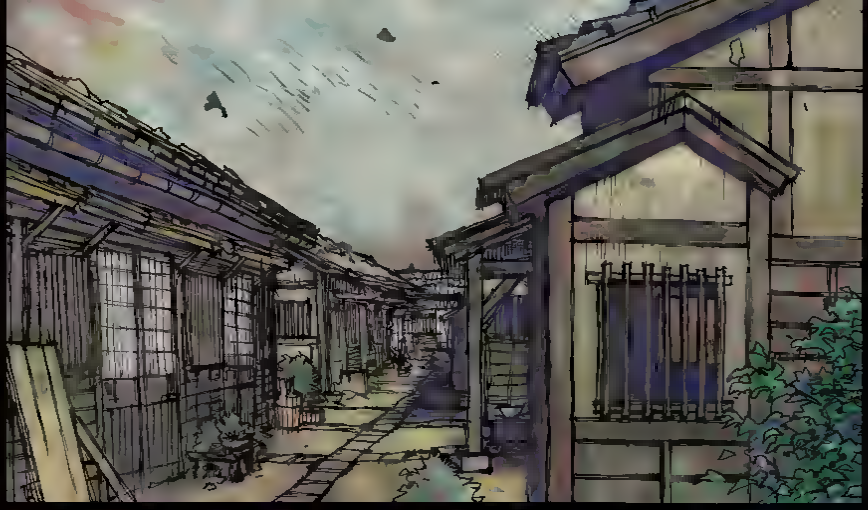
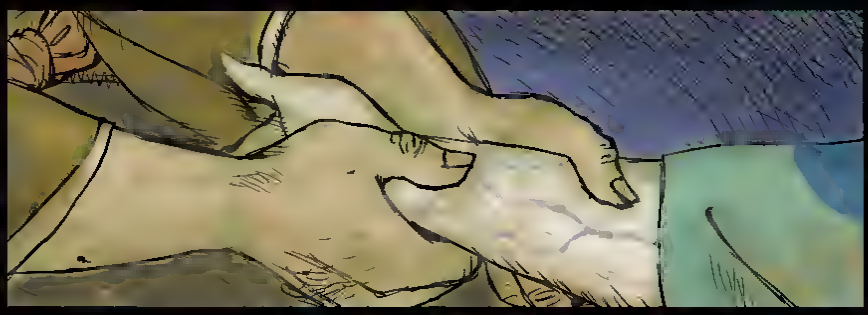
The beasts fight, scrambling against each other for food... and the men watch the scene.

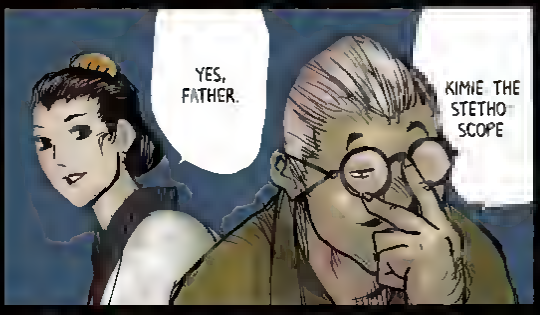
狗の生活

YOU WOULD BE NO DIFFERENT FROM THOSE BEASTS, ROKUROU.
WOULD YOU BRANDISH YOUR SWORD OVER A SINGLE RICE BALL SUCH AS THIS?
I'M NOT SURE WHAT I'LL DO MYSELF, WADA-SAN.
WELL IF I GET ANY HUNGRIER
DEFEND OUR REAR WHILE WE GO ABOUT RAISING FUNDS
THEN WHY DON'T YOU PUT IT TO WORK?
YOU COULD GUARD THE MONEY FROM ANY UNSAVORY TYPES.
MY SWORD IS OF NO USE.
WHAT ELSE CAN I DO WITH IT?
THAT MUST BE HOW MEN DELUDE THEMSELVES AND FALL INTO DEPRAVITY
C'MON, THOSE ARE ALL JUST EXCUSES
A PURPOSE MUCH HIGHER THAN ANY BEAST COULD HAVE
IT'S PROPER WORK IN THE NAME OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OUR NATION.

狗の生活
Dog's Life
Do you live for a purpose, or is your purpose just to live? The great talent that is Matsumoto Jiro makes his debut in this magazine!
Matsumoto Jiro





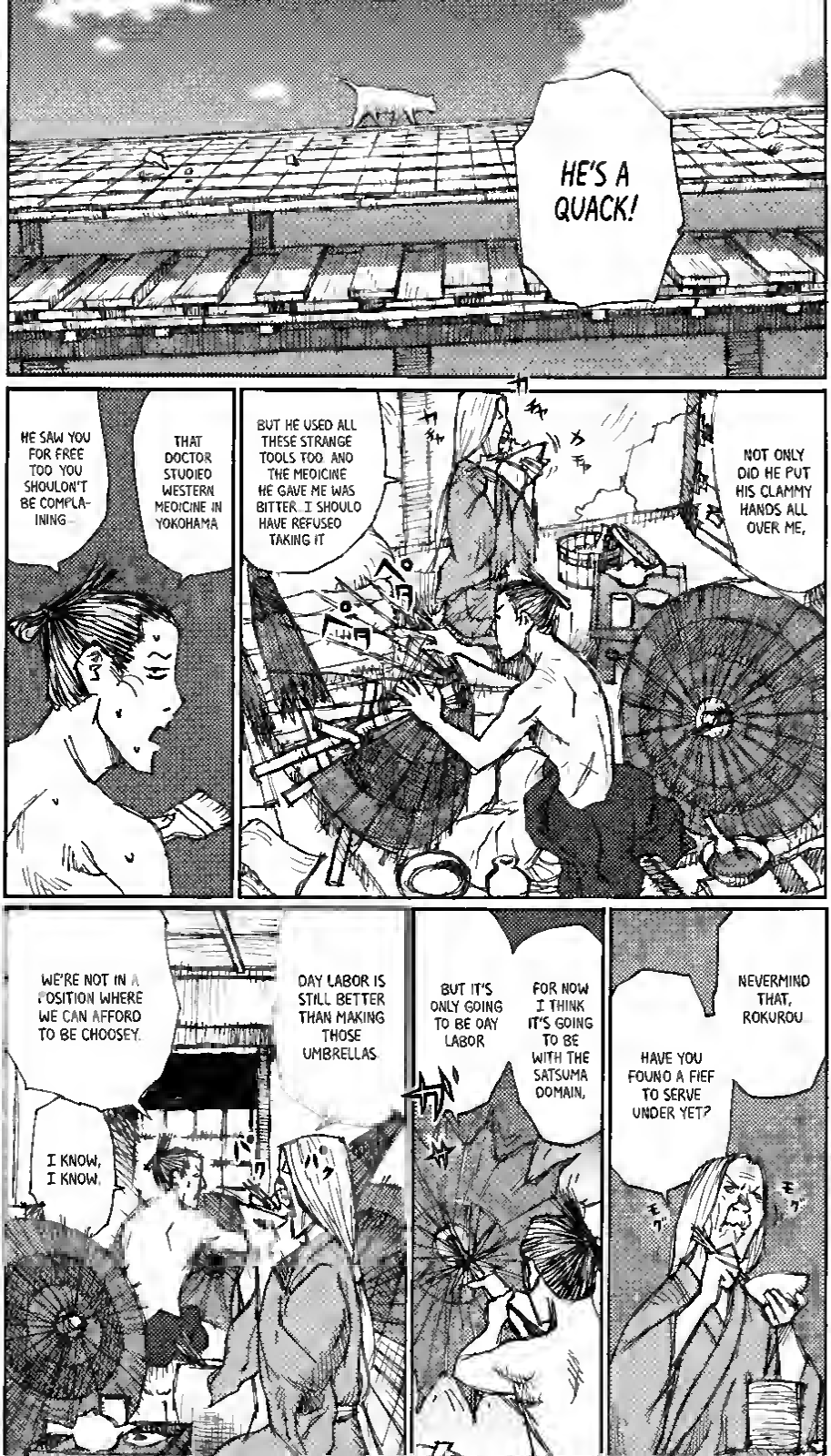

YES, FATHER.
KIMIE. THE STETHO SCOPE

HMM. YOUR PULSE IS A BIT WEAK.
NOW THEN COULD YOU PLEASE COUGH FOR ME?

IT MAY FEEL A BIT COLD, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE OFF THAT KIMONO

MY MOTHER'S HEALTH WAS POOR, SO I CALLED FOR YOU,
BUT NOW I REALIZE I HAVE NO MONEY ON HAND
チチ
I WILL PAY THE MEDICAL FEE WITHOUT FAIL IN THE NEAR FUTURE
UNTIL THEN, IF YOU COULD CONSIDER THIS COLLATERAL...
YOU MAY BE A ROUNIN, BUT YOU ARE STILL A SAMURAI, ARE YOU NOT?
ARE YOU SURE YOU SHOULD BE HANDING OVER YOUR BLADE?
BUT
IT'S NOT OF MUCH VALUE, BUT PLEASE TAKE THIS TACHI...
PLEASE WAIT, ROKUROU-SAN

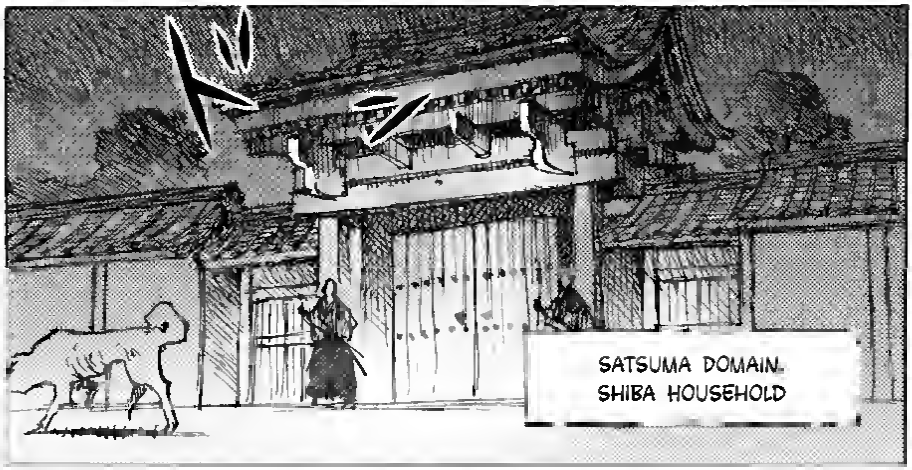
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF TAKING MONEY FROM THOSE WHO ARE POOR.
MEA-NING?
DESPITE MY APPEARANCES, I AM STILL A DOCTOR ALBEIT NOT ONE OF MUCH IMPORT
HUH?
I WILL NOT TAKE A FEE.
THAT'S WHAT MY PURPOSE AS A DOCTOR IS
FU FU FU
IT IS MY DREAM TO BUILD THAT KIND OF ESTABLISHMENT IN OUR COUNTRY.
APPARENTLY IN THE WEST, THEY HAVE LARGE FACILITIES WHERE MANY DOCTORS ARE IN ATTENDANCE.
THE DUTY OF DOCTORS IS TO HELP AS MANY PEOPLE AS THEY CAN LIVE BETTER LIVES.
BOW
IT WILL MOST CERTAINLY BE NECESSARY
USE YOUR SWORD IN ORDER TO FULFILL IT
WITHOUT ONE, YOU'LL BE DONE FOR.
AND YOU, YOU OUGHT TO HAVE YOUR OWN PURPOSE


HE'S A QUACK!
HE SAW YOU FOR FREE TOO. YOU SHOULON'T BE COMPLA-INING.
THAT DOCTOR STUDIED WESTERN MEDICINE IN YOKOHAMA
BUT HE USED ALL THESE STRANGE TOOLS TOO. AND THE MEDICINE HE GAVE ME WAS BITTER. I SHOULD HAVE REFUSED TAKING IT
NOT ONLY DID HE PUT HIS CLAMMY HANDS ALL OVER ME,
WE'RE NOT IN A POSITION WHERE WE CAN AFFORD TO BE CHOOSEY.
DAY LABOR IS STILL BETTER THAN MAKING THOSE UMBRELLAS.
I KNOW, I KNOW.
BUT IT'S ONLY GOING TO BE DAY LABOR
FOR NOW I THINK IT'S GOING TO BE WITH THE SATSUMA DOMAIN,
NEVERMIND THAT, ROKUROU
HAVE YOU FOUND A FIEF TO SERVE UNDER YET?

THERE ARE RUMORS THAT THEY'RE SOWING CHAOS AND DESTRUCTION IN THE CITY SEIZING FUNDS IN THE NAME OF THE NATION
BUT... I HAVEN'T HEARD VERY GOOD WORDS ABOUT THE SATSUMA DOMAIN
SO I CAN'T BE SELECTIVE ABOUT WORK
THERE'S THE DEBT THAT FATHER LEFT BEHIND AS WELL AS THE PART OF THE RENT THAT HASN'T BEEN PAID YET,
BUT THEIR METHODS JUST DON'T SIT WELL WITH ME.
SATSUMA MAY BE DOING IT WITH THEIR OWN PURPOSE IN MIND,
THAT'S WHY SOMEONE ELSE ALWAYS BEATS YOU TO THE PUNCH
YOU MAKE THOSE KINDS OF EXCUSES AND SIT ON YOUR ASS
WHAT SORT OF HALF-BAKED NONSENSE ARE YOU GOING ON ABOUT, ROKUROU?
WHAT IS IT, MOTHER?
YOU LISTEN TO ME, ROKUROU.

WHICH MEANS?
RIGHT
AND A PROPER ONE MUST ASPIRE TO A HIGHER PURPOSE AS A MAN.
YOU ARE A SAMURAI,
THEN I WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO REST IN PEACE!
IF YOU DON'T BECOME A FULL FLEDGED ADULT BEFORE IT HAPPENS,
I KNOW I DON'T HAVE THAT MUCH TIME LEFT ANYMORE, ROKUROU
YOU'VE BEEN SAYING THAT FOR A WHILE THOUGH
I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE THAT THE TRUE WISH OF EVERY SAMURAI IS TO SERVE THEIR LORD AND CARRY OUT THEIR EVERY ORDER.
IN THIS DAY AND AGE, THERE'S NO WAY A MERE ROUNIN LIKE ME COULD GET A JOB LIKE THAT WITHOUT ANY CONNECTIONS
MOTHER DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE REALITY OF THINGS
SCOWL
DON'T LET THIS CHANCE PASS YOU BY NO MATTER WHAT! YOU'RE GOING TO GO GET YOURSELF A SPOT AS ONE OF THEIR SAMURAI!
YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY SAY THAT SOMEONE WHO WOULD LEAVE THEIR OWN MOTHER OUT IN THE COLD AFTER HER DEATH IS ASPIRING TO MUCH OF A PURPOSE, COULD YOU!?

Wooo

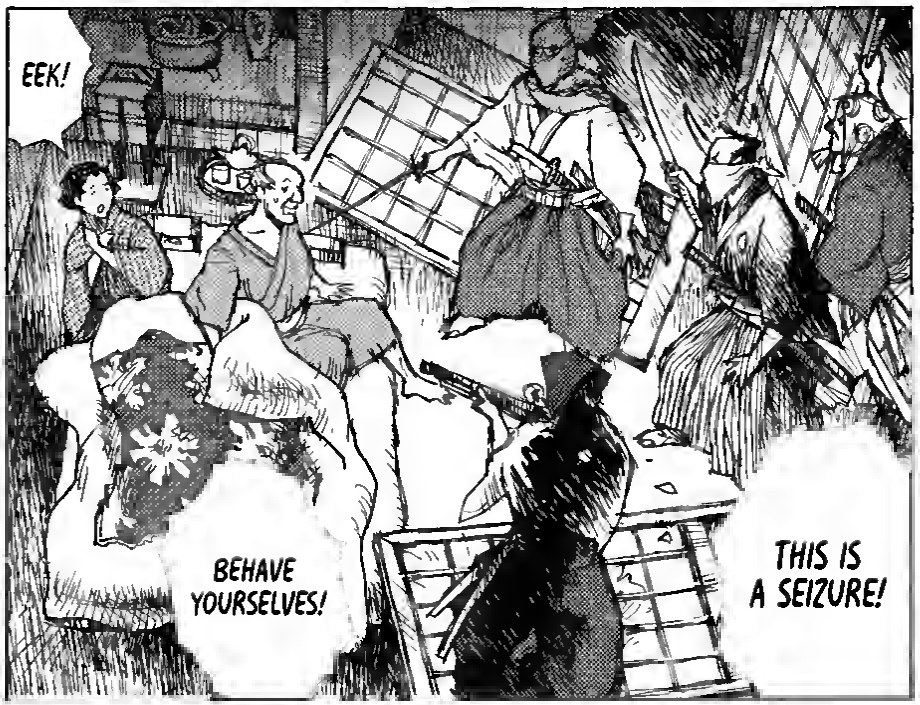

SATSUMA DOMAIN.
SHIBA HOUSEHOLD

I KNEW YOU HAO THE CONVICTION AND RESOLVE FOR THIS THESE EYES OF WAOA JUUZOU HAVE NEVER BEEN WRONG.
OH, GOOD TO SEE YOU HERE, ROKUROU.

W... WHITE RICE...!
THERE'LL BE ORDERS FROM LORD SAGARA SOON.
WELL, EAT UP PROVISIONS.
NO, NO, YOU SEE... MY MOTHER WOULDN'T STOP BADGERING ME ABOUT IT.
I SEE.
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT SOME REAL ROUGHNECKS HERE LIKE USUAL.
GYA HAHA
MAN,
SLEIGHT OF HAND!
I KNOW VERY WELL HOW SKILLED YOU ARE WITH A BLADE FROM OUR SPARS IN THE DOJO.
YOU'RE DIFFERENT.
THOSE GUYS ONLY LOOK TOUGH ON THE OUTSIDE.
YOU SURE THIS WILL BE OKAY...?
I SORT OF FEELS LIKE I DON'T BELONG HERE.
THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR THOSE WHO ARE TRULY SAMURAI TO BE RECOGNIZED.
THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED, ROKUROU. THOSE SKILLS WILL SERVE YOU WELL IN THE COMING ERA.

NO, NO THAT'S NOT QUITE IT...
IT'S THE SPIRIT TO SCORE THAT POINT, EVEN IF IT MEANS MAKING SOMETHING UP ON THE FLY!
SWORDSMANSHIP LIKE YOURS, WHICH DOESN'T CARE HOW IT LOOKS AS LONG AS IT WINS, IS THE REAL DEAL
I SEE
THOSE CHUMPS WHO ONLY KNOW HOW TO WAX POETIC WON'T BE WORTH A DAMN
NO NEED FOR EXPLANATIONS! IT'S ALL FINE! SAVE THE MODESTY FOR SOMEONE ELSE!
GA HA HA HA HA
MY SWORD TECHNIQUES FOCUS ON CLOSE COMBAT AFTER THRUSTING MYSELF INTO THE OPPONENT. THAT'S WHERE THE SECRETS OF MY STYLE REALLY LIE...
W...WADA-SAN!
ARE YOU STARTING TO SEE HOW FAR THAT SWORD OF YOURS CAN TAKE YOU NOW, ROKUROU?
I COULD RECOMMEND YOU FOR THE JOB IF YOU LIKE, DEPENDING ON HOW THIS ONE GOES
OH RIGHT, ROKUROU, HOW ABOUT YOU COME WORK FOR THE DOMAIN FORMALLY?
WHOA THERE, ALMOST FORGOT IT SHOULD BE ABOUT TIME
I'LL... FOLLOW YOU FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!

THIS IS THE WILL OF HEAVEN WHICH MUST BE CARRIED OUT FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF JAPAN. WE EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM YOU
JUSTICE WILL BE OURS! THEIR TREASURES WILL BE OURS!
AND SOME WOMEN TOO!
WE'LL BE ABLE TO GET SOME GOOD BOOZE!
BY THE WAY, YOU'LL BE PAID 15 KANMON PER PERSON FOR THE DAY'S WORK.
GUESS I BETTER WORK HARD THEN!
THUS ON THIS NIGHT, THE CAMPAIGN TO RAISE FUNDS GREW EXTREMELY VIOLENT
AS THE BEASTS WERE SET UPON THE CITY OF EDO.


EEK!
BEHAVE YOURSELVES!
THIS IS A SEIZURE!

YOU SHOULD APPRECIATE OUR EFFORTS AND COUGH IT UP!
WE'RE COLLECTING YOUR FUNDS TO REBUILD JAPAN
LOOK FOR ANYTHING OF VALUE!

THIS CAN'T REALLY BE CALLED FUND RAISING
NOBODY COULD POSSIBLY REFUSE IN THESE CONDITIONS
J-JUST SPARE OUR LIVES
...
I TRUST YOU HAVE NO OBJECTIONS?
!
OKAY, WE'LL DO THIS ONE
EEEK!
WE'VE GOT ANOTHER SIX HOUSES TO GO MAKE HASTE!
ALL RIGHT, ON TO THE NEXT ONE
EEP!
GUHK!

D-DEAR!
UKYAA
EEEK!
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME!
THEY'RE CUTTING DOWN EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THE CITY FOLK THAT HAPPEN TO PASS BY
STOP THEM, PLEASE!
EH?
G-GDDD LORD ..! WADA-SAN, WADA-SAN!
KEEP IT UP, AND WE'LL BE BEHIND SCHEDULE!
NO, NO THAT'S NOT QUITE IT—
YOU DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO JUST FOOL AROUND OVER THERE!
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU ASSHOLES DOING!?

THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE IN EDO ANYWAY THEY'RE DOING EVERYONE A FAVOR BY THINNING IT OUT A BIT.
WELL, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO TEACH THOSE IDIOTS PROPER MANNERS EITHER
I DON'T THINK IT FALLS UNDER THE CATEGORY OF RAISING FUNDS.
THE THINGS THAT THOSE PEOPLE ARE DOING
GAHA-HAHA!
DON'T YOU AGREE, ROKUROU?
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE GOING SO FAR.
LIGHT A FIRE OVER THERE TOO WHILE YOU'RE AT IT!
EEE-EEK!
IT'S A FIRE!
JUST SO I CAN SECURE A SEAT IN THE LORD'S SERVICE...? IS THIS WHAT I ASPIRE TO?
SHOULD I GO ALONG WITH SUCH ACTS OF BARBARITY

THIS IS A SEIZURE!
JUST SHUT UP AND BRING OUT THE MONEY YOU'VE GOT HOARDED,
OR ELSE WE'LL CUT YOU DOWN!
W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING...!?
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY!?
AH!
TO OUTLAWS SUCH AS YOU!
I HAVE NO MONEY TO HAND OVER...

FATHER...!
P-PLEASE STOP...!
...
WHAT ABOUT NOW, OLD MAN!?
IN ORDER TO TREAT THOSE THAT ARE POOR AND IN NEED
THAT MONEY IS FOR THE CONSTRUC-TION OF FACILI-TIES...
YOU MUSTN'T HAND IT OVER...
NO.. KIMIE...
WE'LL HAND OVER THE MONEY!
PLEASE DON'T KILL MY FATHER!
HAHAHA, WHAT A CATCH!
HERE IT IS, SIR!
GO SEARCH FOR IT!
THE MONEY IS UNDER THE ALCOVE! JUST TAKE IT AND GO!

ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
GOT IT!
THIS ALL HAPPENED BECAUSE YOU DECIDED TO BE GREEDY AND GO AGAINST US UNDERSTAND, OLD MAN?

HANG IN THERE, FATHER!
FATHER!

YOU'RE NOTHING BUT BEASTS!
YOU CALL YOURSELVES HUMAN!?
HOW CRUEL!

BUT IT'LL ONLY GET IN THE WAY IF WE HAVE TO DRAG IT AROUND WITH US...
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE OLD COOT HAD SO MUCH GOLD IN HIS COFFERS...
ROKU-ROU!
YOU TWO OVER THERE AND...
HOW ABOUT IF I LEAVE IT IN HIS CARE FOR NOW?
AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE LIVES NEARBY
THAT'S FINE TAKE CARE OF IT
LET'S CHANGE THE MEETING PLACE TO THE WAREHOUSES AT SURUGA-CHOU DON'T LAG BEHIND
WE'VE GOT A REPORT THAT THE SHIN-CHOUGUMI ARE RAPIDLY MAKING THEIR WAY HERE
YES?
WE'LL MEET UP WITH THE MAIN GROUP LATER.
YOU GUYS ARE GOING TO COME WITH ME... AND CARRY THE GOLD TO THE HOUSE NEARBY.
LET'S GO!

YOU HELP CARRY THE BOX TOO!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, ROKUROU?
!
I DON'T THINK THAT'S QUITE IT.
NO, NO...
PLEASE RETURN THAT MONEY TO ITS OWNER
WADA-SAN,
HE HAS A MUCH HIGHER PURPOSE FOR THE MONEY THAN YOU.

ARE YOU MAD?
...ROKU-ROU,
WHAT I SHOULD BE USING MY SWORD FOR
I'M FINALLY STARTING TO SEE, WADA-SAN,

HAH.
HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA HA
EVERYONE IN THIS CITY... NO, THIS COUNTRY, HAS BECOME RAVING LUNATICS!
IT'S SUCH A RELIEF TO SEE THAT WE'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES THAT HAVE LOST THEIR MINDS.
YOU REALLY HAVE GONE MAD!
THE STARS HAVE ALIGNED TO GIVE YOU THIS CHANCE TO SERVE UNDER A LORD, AND YOU MAKE A MOCKERY OF IT!
IT'S HILARIOUS! LAUGH, EVERYONE, LAUGH! LAUGH UNTIL YOUR HEARTS ARE ALL CONTENT! HAHAHA-HAHA!
HOW COULD YOU NOT LAUGH AT THIS? THERE'S NOT A PERSON AMONG US WITH HIS SANITY LEFT INTACT!

HA HA HA
EHEH.
HEE... HEE.
HEH
HEH HEH
HA HA HA HA HA
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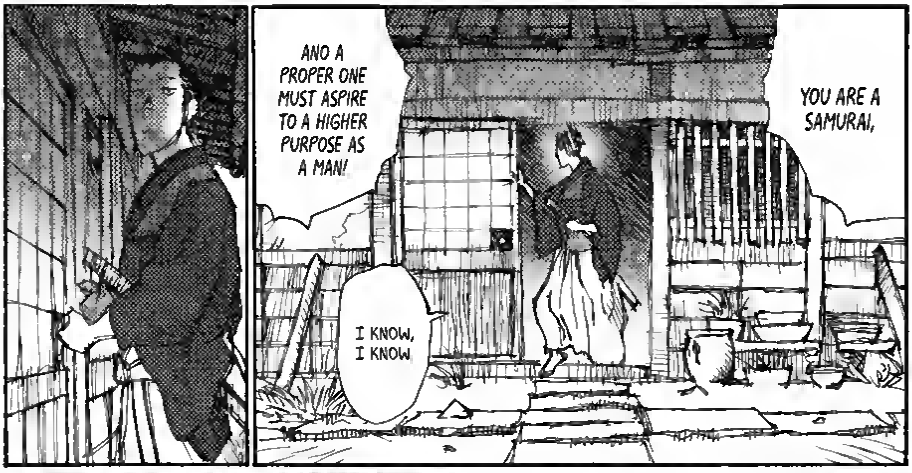
WHOA!
ROKU-ROU!

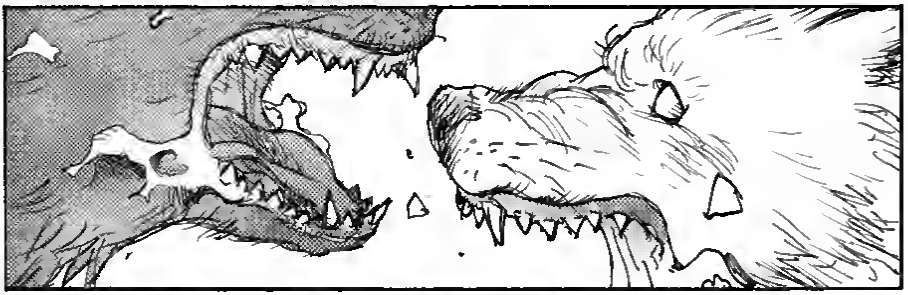
JUST ONE OF THESE KIRIMOCHI...
WOULD BE ENOUGH TO PAY THE LOAN AND RENT WITH CHANGE TO SPARE
CLACK
THAT'S ALL OF THEM.

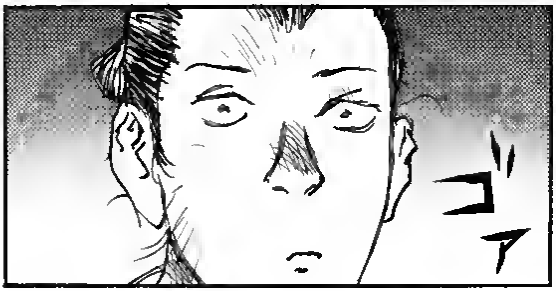
I'VE GONE AND DONE IT NOW.
SOMEONE ELSE WILL SURELY BEAT ME TO PUNCH WITH THIS
ASPIRING TO A HIGHER PURPOSE AS A MAN
SURE IS BACK-BREAKING

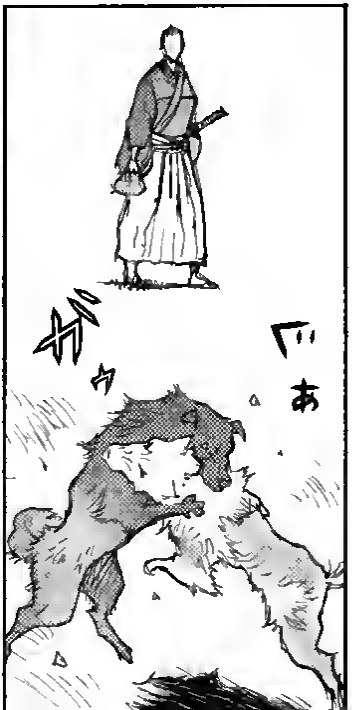
YOU SAID YOU FINALLY FOUND A JOB, SO I THOUGHT IT WOULD SURELY BE WITH SOME DISTINGUISHED FAMILY.
I AM SO UTTERLY SHOCKED THAT I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY, ROKUROU.

IF IT MEANS CASTING AWAY OUR PRIDE AS SAMURAI, THEN IT WOULD'VE BEEN BETTER IF YOU JUST DIED IN SOME DITCH!
HMPH!
I'M OFF THEN, MOTHER
AND WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO AVOID BEING EVICTED FROM THE ROW HOUSES
WELL, THE PAY ISN'T MUCH, BUT IT'S ENOUGH TO AFFORD BARLEY AND RICE
NO DOUBT I'LL CONTINUE JUST SPINNING IN MY GRAVE EVEN AFTER I'M DEAD
NEVER IN MY LIFE WOULD I HAVE IMAGINED IT WOULD BE AS A BODY-GUARD FOR THAT QUACK









IN ORDER TO SUPPRESS THE TURMOIL CAUSED BY THE SEIZURES THAT THE SATSUMA DOMAIN WERE BEHIND, THE BAKUFU SECURITY FORCES LAUNCHED A COUNTERATTACK ON THE SHIBA HOUSEHOLD.

Aspirations alone will leave you starved... But without them, you'll lose sight of tomorrow... How difficult life is in this floating world.

IN THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE KEIOU ERA, THE BOSHIN WAR BROKE OUT.
THAT WAS THE FIRST OF MANY CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN THE BAKUFU AND THE SATSUMA DOMAIN. WHICH BECAME INCREASINGLY SEVERE.
JAPAN WOULD ENTER A TUMULTUOUS PERIOD IN WHICH MUCH BLOOD WOULD BE SHED.
I'M SO HUNGRY...

THE END

Notes:

Shinchougumi - a group of ronin samurai established by the Bakufu to defend the city.

Kirimochi - stack of gold coins.

Keiou era - period from May 1865 to October 1868.

The Boshin War - a civil war, fought from 1868 to 1869 between forces of the ruling Tokugawa shogunate and those seeking to return political power to the Imperial Court.